

MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS

Chapter 1

THE HEART OF MANAGING WELL

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Nearly anyone can stand adversity, but if you want to test a person's character, give them power.

Abraham Lincoln

1.1 The Seven Pillars of Management Excellence

ABOUT THIS TOOL—These seven words form the bedrock for your managerial practice in supporting employee success.

APPLICATION—Use these key words as prompts for further research and personal reflection. They can also serve as the basis for dialogue and feedback from your employees. Which key words matter most to your employees? Where do you already shine? Where do you need to grow?

Key Word	Defined	Why it matters
Integrity	Acting honestly and consistently with one's espoused values and ethical principles	To sustain a credible presence with your team by walking your talk, modeling the behavior you want to see in your team members.
Clarity	Clear, concrete, understandable, simple	To encourage, direct, delegate, and give feedback in a way that is clearly understood by others
Empathy¹	Understanding, appreciation, compassion, insight	To act with a full understanding of what others are experiencing
Courage	"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." -Winston Churchill	To step up to the practical and emotional challenges you must face as a manager
Curiosity	The continuing desire to learn more about a subject, individual, or idea	To deepen and broaden your appreciation of the complexity and nuances of any given situation
Attention	Concentrated direction of the mind that reflects, awareness, consideration, interest, presence, and courtesy	To demonstrate in practice that each employee matters, both in and of themselves and as contributors to overall team success
Persistence	To continue steadfastly or firmly in purpose or course of action	To stay focused on what you're striving to achieve as a manager; not giving up in the face of disappointments or setbacks

Source: Developed by the author

¹ Compassion vs. Empathy: While empathy refers more generally to our ability to take the perspective of and feel the emotions of another person, compassion is when those feelings and thoughts include the desire to help. ["What is Compassion?"

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>]

1.2 The Heart of Managing Well

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Creating a motivating environment for employees that fosters individual and team success is the outcome of the daily routines reflected in this chart.

APPLICATION—In which behaviors do you shine? Which would you like to develop further? Why? Ask your employees as a group to tell you where you shine and what they would like to see more of from you.

	Autonomy²	Mastery	Purpose
Listen	1. Know your employees 2. Pay positive attention 3. Put yourself in their shoes 4. Ask for feedback	5. Encourage career aspirations 6. Identify relevant learning opportunities	7. Keep current 8. Scan the horizon 9. Serve as a sounding board when difficult situations arise
Set Goals	10. Delegate intentionally 11. Build trust—listen, inform, follow-through, advocate when appropriate 12. Help prioritize 13. Foster teamwork	14. Give challenging assignments and the chance to learn something new 15. Support learning 16. Provide technical support, guidance, and feedback	17. Connect the work to the mission 18. Walk the talk 19. Cultivate self-awareness 20. Clarify your values and seek to understand the values of your staff 21. Admit your mistakes
Cultivate Accountability	22. Clarify responsibilities, authority, expectations 23. Encourage problem-solving. Ask: “What would you do?” 24. Paint a picture of success 25. Establish regular communication routines 26. Reward good work 27. Be candid about work that is sub-par	28. Be alert to coachable moments 29. Encourage learning from the work 30. Give timely, specific feedback 31. Connect employees to mentors	32. Ask: What best serves the organization’s mission, vision, and values? 33. Identify and discuss the ethical dimensions of our work.

Source: Developed by the author

²Daniel H. Pink, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, (NY: Riverhead, 2009), Introduction

1.3 Five Traits of a Great Boss

ABOUT THIS TOOL—This article summarizes the results of a client survey conducted by consultant, executive coach, and author Halley Bock (www.halleybock.com). It's five findings provide a timeless guide for every manager's day-to-day practice.

APPLICATION—Underline words and phrases that resonate with you. Why are they important and how do they show up in your management practice?

Optional: Share this article with your team. Ask, 1) what is going well, and 2) what needs improving.

1. **Value what employees say.** Eighty percent of respondents who identified a positive relationship with their boss said that one of the top factors in the relationship's success is that their employer values their input. When your employee comes to you with an idea, it's important to sit down, actively listen, and explore the idea even when it seems unrealistic at first. If you miss the opportunity to process their input you will not only short-change yourself, you will diminish the relationship.
2. **Solicit diverse opinions.** Forty percent of people who claimed a poor working relationship said that the relationship was failing in part because their manager never solicited their input in the decision-making process. Not all employees will volunteer their opinions, especially early in the relationship. Actively solicit diverse opinions and feedback and draw out all perspectives. This will help ensure that employees feel heard and valued, keeping them engaged and encouraging them to grow.
3. **Offer constructive feedback.** Almost 40 percent of survey participants who reported a good relationship felt that it was important for managers to offer constructive feedback. While listening is important, supervisors must also play an active part in staff development by offering perspectives on their ideas. This takes extra time and effort, but it is well worth it to ensure that employees are prepared to take on new responsibilities and roles.
4. **Be honest.** More than thirty-three percent of respondents also cite honesty as a key component of a successful relationship. Employees crave transparency and candor. Trust that your employees are capable of handling the truth, whether it's in reference to their performance or the company's overall trajectory. When reality is presented in a non-threatening manner, people can rise to the occasion while gaining the opportunity to play a more meaningful role in their individual and collective success.
5. **Keep everyone informed.** More than forty percent of those surveyed who claimed a bad working relationship with their manager felt their boss failed to keep them in the loop. Once a decision is reached, leaders often fail to communicate the decision effectively to those who are affected by it. Keep your employees informed so they clearly see the impact they have on the organization and your decision-making process. Few things can be more frustrating than being left in the dark. People crave high levels of candor, collaboration, and curiosity from their managers. While it may require leaders to slow down, building relationships that foster engaged employees and improved decision-making on both sides is more than worth it.

Source: Halley Bock, "Five Traits of a Great Boss," Ragan's HR Communications, October 14, 2011.

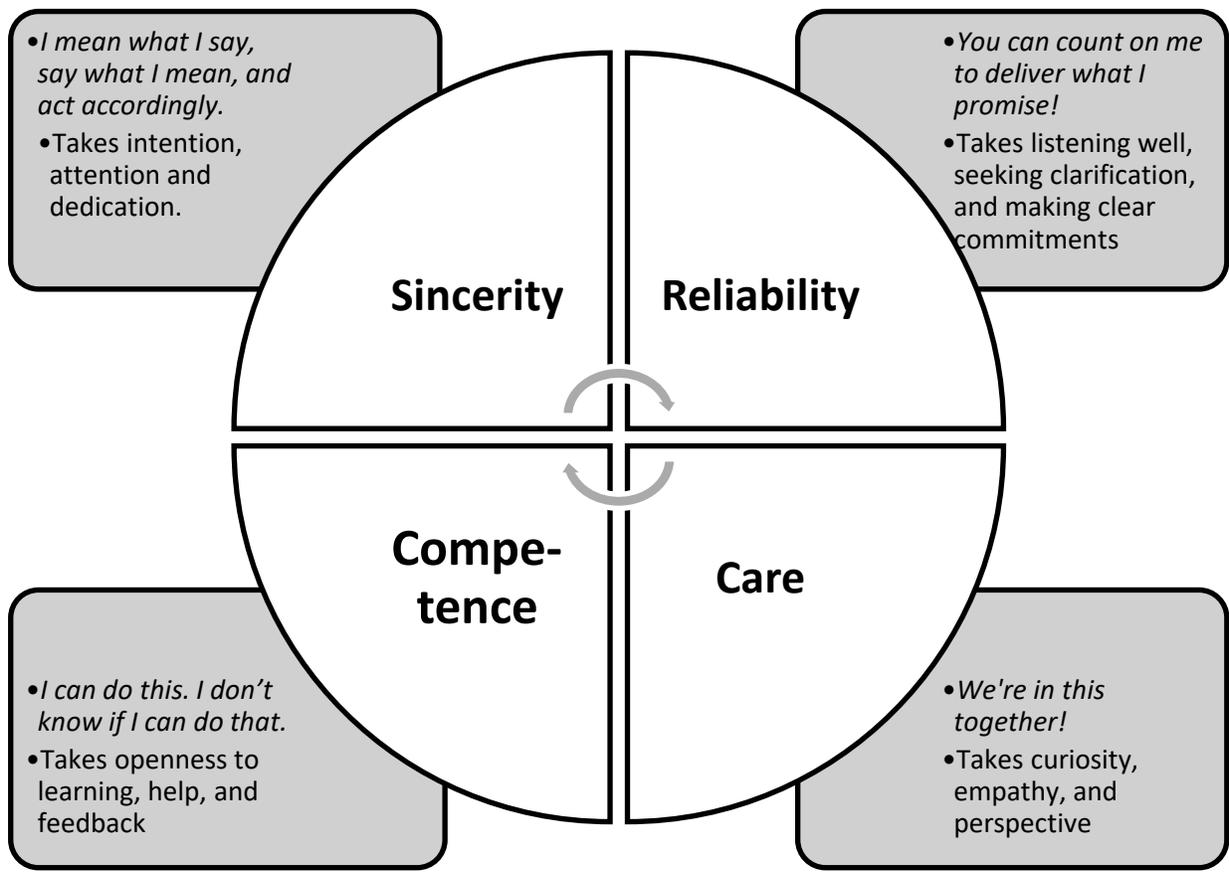
1.4 Trust is the Foundation

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Trust between managers and employees is the primary defining characteristic of the very best workplaces. In the same vein, Patrick Lencioni writes that trust is the foundation on which teamwork is built: “Trust lies at the heart of a functioning, cohesive team. Without it, teamwork is all but impossible.”³

Yet building trust isn’t simple or quick, and it can be lost in an instant. Brene Brown observes, “...Trust is earned in the smallest moments. It is earned not through heroic deeds, or even highly visible actions, but through paying attention, listening, and gestures of genuine care and connection.”⁴

APPLICATION—Use these qualities in assessing your trustworthiness. How can you be worthy of your employees’ trust? How can you build a culture of trust?

Optional: Share and discuss this tool with your team to develop a shared understanding of trust.



Source: Adapted from Charles Feltman, *The Thin Book of Trust*, (Bend, OR: Thin Book Publishing, 2009)

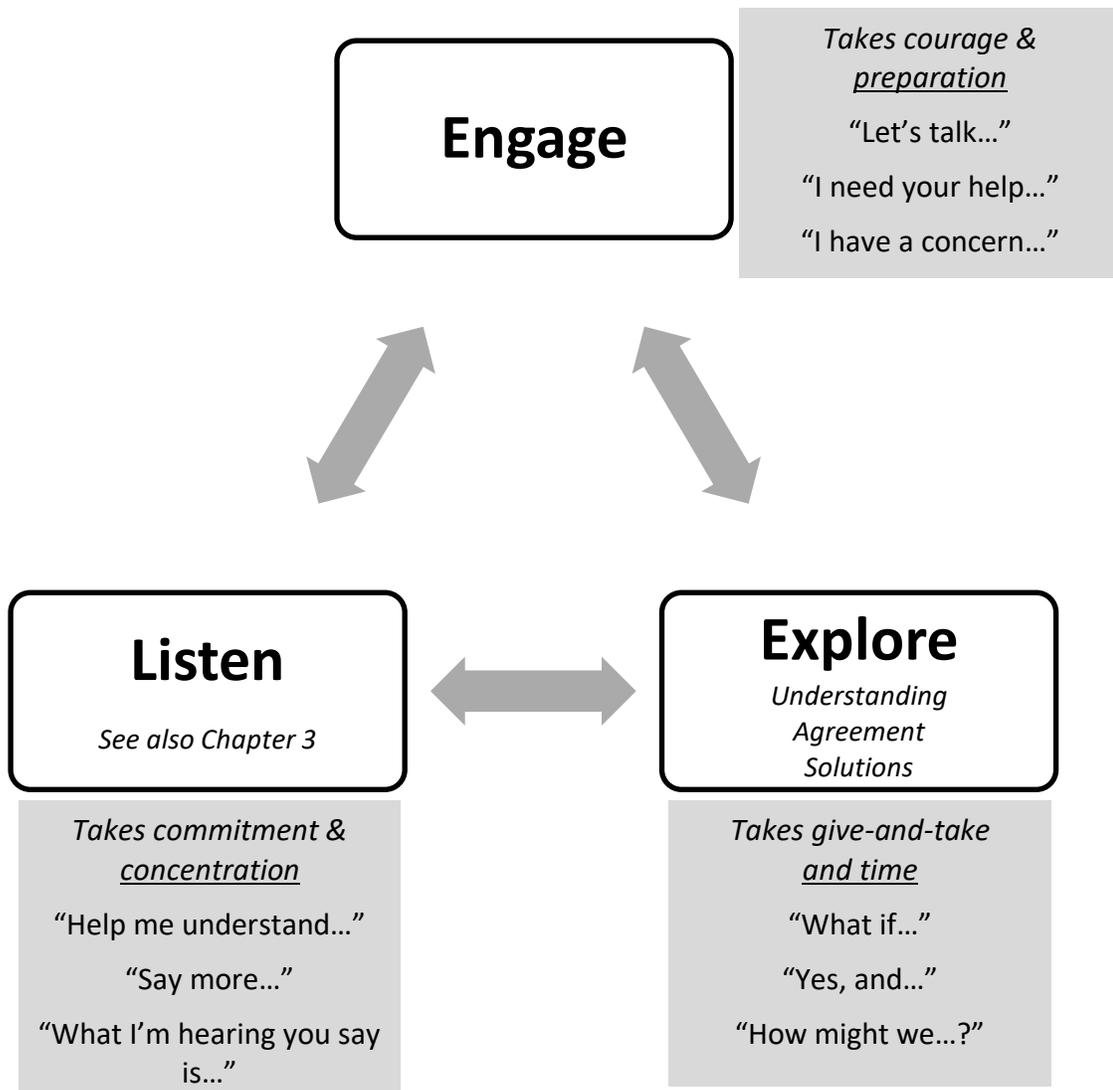
³ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, (SF: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 195

⁴ Brene Brown, *Dare to Lead: Daring Greatly and Rising Strong at Work*, (NY: Random House, 2018), 32

1.5 A Pathway to Trust and Collaboration

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Successful collaboration is built on trust. This tool describes the essential elements and conversational cues that build trust through dialogue, curiosity, and checking for understanding and agreement.

APPLICATION—Use this framework to prepare for meetings with employees and colleagues where collaboration, creativity, and trust-building are key, especially where there may be tensions or differences.



Source: Developed by the author

1.6 Cultivating a Healthy Workplace Culture

ABOUT THIS TOOL—What would you expect to see in a healthy workplace, one that is affirming to its members, mindful of its community, and productive for its investors? These eight qualities of a healthy workplace were inspired by Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot’s book, *Respect*⁵.

APPLICATION—Use this acrostic to spark a discussion with your team on the meaning and behavioral implications of all eight words. What would expect to see, hear, and do in a workplace where these qualities were fully present? Where does your team excel now? What gaps do you see? What steps can you take to make these qualities a stronger?

R	Resilient	Rebounding from setbacks and adapting to the unexpected
E	Energetic	Characterized by enthusiasm and excitement in pursuing one’s objectives
S	Serendipitous	Discovering surprising connections leading to novel solutions.
P	Purposeful	Aligned with the organization’s mission, values, and professional
E	Empathetic	Caring about and appreciating other experiences and
C	Conflict-positive	Respectfully surfacing and exploring opposing points of view to make better
T	Trusting	Relationships characterized by the four pillars of trust: Sincerity, competence, reliability, and care. See Tool 1.4

The *six windows of respect*—empowerment, healing, dialogue, curiosity, self-respect, and attention.

Source: Developed by the author

⁵ Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, *Respect: An Exploration*, (NY: Perseus, 1999)

1.7 A Dozen Ideas on Managing Inclusively

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Organizations rely on ever more diverse teams to achieve successful outcomes in an increasingly complex competitive landscape. Diverse teams bring energy, liveliness, and fresh insights to these challenges. Yet tapping the experience and creativity of so many different ages, races, nationalities, and varied sexual identities, making all feel valued and welcomed, takes deliberate attention to inclusive management practices.

“Inclusive leadership is not about occasional grand gestures, but regular, small-scale comments and actions,” write Juliet Bourke and Andrea Titus⁶. “Relating to people who are different from us takes hard work and can be anxiety-provoking,” they continue. “Yet doing the necessary work to notice, connect, value, and respond to others needs results in more effective working relationships.”⁷

APPLICATION—Review these ideas with your team. What do they see are priorities? Get the perspective of your chief diversity officer if your organization has one. Begin the journey and stick with it!

1. “Inclusive leaders...make diversity and inclusion a personal priority. They are modest about their capabilities, admits mistakes, and create the space for others to contribute.”⁸
2. Invest in developing ever greater emotional intelligence (EQ), yours and your team’s. *For example, the book Emotional Intelligence 2.0 by Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves includes an individualized EQ assessment with improvement strategies related to your results. Watch this [MindTools video](#) for few ideas on developing greater emotional intelligence.*
3. Acknowledge historical injustices, appreciate the progress that has been made, and recognize the progress still needed in creating a more just and equitable society.
4. Make time to discuss troubling current events, even if the issues resist easy resolution. *Follow the advice of Glenn Singleton and Cyndie Hays for such conversations to, “...stay engaged, expect to experience discomfort, speak your truth, and expect and accept lack of closure.”*⁹
5. Delight in discovery! Cultivate cultural curiosity through 1:1 meetings, private reading, and exploratory research.
6. Learn your biases and adapt accordingly. *Harvard’s free RACE IAT ([Implicit Association Test](#)) is a good place to start. Use the results to check your instinctive approaches and responses. Also, review the practical tips for countering unconscious bias from the free playlists at [Cornerstone Cares](#).*
7. Recognize employees the way they wish to be recognized; use the pronouns they prefer.

⁶ Julia Bourke & Andrea Titus, “Why Inclusive Leaders are Good for Organizations, and How to Become One”, Harvard Business Review, March 29, 2019

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Glenn E. Singleton & Cyndie Hays, “[Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race](#),” accessed online March 23, 2022

8. Learn about microaggressions, the everyday slights, indignities, and invalidations that people of color and other marginalized communities experience in their everyday interactions.
Watch the moving [Microaggressions in Everyday Life](#) from Columbia University professor Derald Wing Sue.
9. Pay attention to the distribution of work, training, and prominent assignments among your team members.
10. Get feedback on your management, either directly or through a coach, especially as it pertains to your inclusive management skills.
A simple way to start is by using Tool 1.2 [The Heart of Managing Well](#) to assess yourself and get feedback from your team.
11. “Try tomorrow: If you were to start a conversation about some race issue with your colleagues, what issue would you like it to be?”¹⁰ Frame the conversation in a way that is relevant to your team’s interests in growing more culturally and racially aware.
12. Listen.
See Chapter 3 for tips on strengthening your listening skills.

Source: Developed by the author

¹⁰ Ibid

1.8 Choose to Have Fun

ABOUT THIS TOOL—What a pleasant surprise when one of the co-authors of the maxim below shared it spontaneously during a meeting of organization development practitioners. Since then, I’ve come to appreciate more fully the practicality of fun in creating positive and productive workplaces.

“Levity and humor are essential tools for forging more human connections and improving performance, strengthening bonds in the good times, and fostering resilience for the bad times,” write the authors of *Humor, Seriously*¹¹, Jennifer Aaker and Naomi Bagdonas. “The goal isn’t to elicit raucous, rolling-on-the-floor laughter; it’s simply to create a moment of connection. Often, all it takes is a mindset of levity to transform a relationship or moment.”

APPLICATION—Share it and live it

Choose to have fun
Fun creates enjoyment
Enjoyment invites participation
Participation focuses attention
Attention expands awareness
Awareness promotes insight
Insight generates knowledge
Knowledge facilitates action
Action yields results

Source: Developed by Joelle & Paul Everett from the teachings of Oswald B. Swallow

¹¹ Jennifer Aaker and Naomi Bagdonas, *Humor, Seriously: Why Humor Is a Secret Weapon in Business and Life*, (NY: Random House, 2021)